



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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June 5, 2006

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Children living in the marshlands gather outside to help their mother with daily activities at their house in North Basra on Friday. The Marsh Arabs were in danger of losing all of their land to factories under the Saddam regime.

Marshlands receive restoration

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. James Sherrill
This Week in Iraq Editor

BASRA — The Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources inherited what it calls one of the world's greatest environmental catastrophes from the former regime - the parched Mesopotamian marshes in southern Iraq.

Marsh Arabs have been living among the southern wetlands for thousands of years, making their homes from abundant reeds and mud. They sell the reeds, catch fish from long wooden boats and herd water-buffalo to sustain themselves.

Fed by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the giant wetlands once stretched for more than 6,200 square-miles.

When Saddam Hussein seized power in the early 1970s, he began ordering small sections of the wetland drained to make room for military factories, chemical

plants and other industry.

The ancient marshes fell victim to the regime once again during the Iran-Iraq war, beginning in 1980, and were drained even further because of the land's perceived tactical value.

The biggest impact on the marshes came at the conclusion of the Gulf War in 1991. Hussein gave the order to drain the marshes completely in retribution for the Shia uprising against the regime. The huge cost of draining the marshes put a burden on Iraq's economy, and the environmental impact on the marshes' ecosystem was disastrous. Certain types of birds, fish and plants normally found in the marshes rapidly disappeared.

By 1996, the marshes were reduced to less than 10 percent of their pre-1991

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GENERAL CASEY'S CORNER**A letter to the troops**

By Gen. George W. Casey
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Commanding General



Editor's note: Gen. George W. Casey, the commander of Multi-National Force - Iraq, addressed the following letter to all servicemembers under his command as a reminder of the professional values of the Coalition troops.

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines of the Multi-National Force,

Over the last three years, your sacrifices and those of your comrades before you brought the Iraqi people freedom, a democratically elected government, and a chance for a new future. The Multi-National Force is now at the point where we can move from the forefront of the effort to secure freedom to a position where we assist the Iraqis in securing and governing their own country. One important way for us to assist the Iraqis is to demonstrate the discipline and values that mark us as professional armed forces of free and democratic nations.

Discipline, accountability, and adherence to legal principles governing armed conflict are fundamental to every professional military organization. They underscore the primacy of law and exemplify ethical conduct in operations, both of which are central to our campaign against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. Rules of engagement are concise guidance on lawful and proportionate use of force during all operations. These rules ensure that our forces can accomplish their assigned mission while safeguarding noncombatants, and while exercising the inherent right of self-defense.

Military leaders are required to make difficult decisions, often in dangerous and ambiguous situations. Our decisions must reflect our professional values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Individually and collectively, our commitment to these values will ensure our conduct is above reproach in every respect.

As Iraq enters a new era of democratic government founded on adherence to the Rule of Law, we renew our commitment to uphold our professional military values. Guided by these principles, we will assist the Iraqis in prevailing over the terrorists and their allies that threaten their future unity, security and prosperity.

Sincerely,

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, U.S. Army
Commanding

GENERAL CASEY'S CORNER*Photos around the Fertile Crescent*

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Eric Elgin, from the 22nd Infantry Regiment, examines a patient during a medical and humanitarian mission in Baghdad.



U.S. Army Spc. Brian Stubbs provides security during a routine presence patrol on the outskirts of Sadr City.



A Danish Army Soldier dismounts a truck as the troops prepare to secure an area outside of Camp Echo.



A Soldier hands out rubber basketballs to children of a local school.

QUOTE of the WEEK

Never give in--never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

--Winston Churchill--

Iraqi police undeterred by attacks

Story and photos by
Story by Cpl. Antonio Rosas
1st Marine Division

HUSAYBAH - Despite two recent suicide bombings on a new police station here, an Iraqi Police captain in this Iraq-Syria border town says his men are undeterred in their duties and are ready to work on their own.

Ahmed, 45, is one of several new police officers in this city of 50,000 who has endured two attacks on the city's district police headquarters that killed five police officers and injured eight others.

The first attack occurred when a man walked to the police station and detonated a vest bomb, killing five policemen and wounding five others.

Several days later, the station was attacked again - this time by a vehicle bomb which detonated prematurely, killing two of the vehicle's passengers and wounding another. Three policemen were wounded in that incident.

The attacks came just one month after the opening of the police station.

Despite these attacks the Iraqi cops are undeterred in their duties, said Ahmed.

"It is a lot safer in Husaybah now," said Ahmed, who recalled more violent times in the city before Coalition forces conducted a large-scale operation to rid the

city of insurgents last November.

Now, officers are conducting independent operations - regular foot and vehicle patrols through the city.

"I can walk the streets and not be scared for my life," he said.

The U.S. Marines assigned to work with and mentor the fledgling police force agree. They say the police reacted appropriately during the bombings, rushing to the scene to treat the wounded and secure the area.

Just days after the second bombing, the police officers continue to work and are receiving cooperation from the locals every day - a sign of progress towards stability in the region, according to the transition team.

"They're still doing a good job, just a little more alert now," said Maj. Robert C. Marshall, officer-in-charge of the police transition team here.

The police here are all local men - more incentive for them to keep the neighborhoods crime and terrorist-free, said Ahmed.

The police conduct regular security patrols alongside Marines and, for the most part, work independently.

"They are providing law and order in their city and are abiding by all Iraqi laws," said Marshall.

"These guys take initiative and they are motivated despite the violence against them," said the Denver native. "They really care about being police officers and are not in it just for the paycheck."

Marshall noted that the police officers here worked nearly two months without seeing a paycheck. It was only until last week when they were finally paid.

The Marines of the 7th Marine



Lance Cpl. Tyler Milke of the 7th Marine Regiment conducts combined patrols with Iraqi Police in the border town of Husaybah.

Regiment - the Marine unit assigned to provide security and assist Iraqi Security Forces in the Euphrates Valley region in northwestern Al Anbar Province - have also watched the police officers evolve and begin to take the lead in security operations.

"The Iraqi Police are doing their job well and they are trying to match the job that the Marines and Iraqi Army are doing of providing security," said 2nd Lt. Chris J. Jamison, a Marine platoon leader.

Patrolling the area and providing security is a step-by-step process, said Jamison.

"Teaching the police to do that job is tough but they are motivated and they are starting to do things the way we do."

Jamison and his Marines conducted foot patrols with the new officers for two weeks to establish a presence in the community and introduce the policemen as a new element of Iraqi Security Forces.

Jamison said that there is an added sense of security for his Marines when patrolling with the Iraqi Police because the officers know the area and the people.

"They live here. They know who doesn't belong," said Jamison.



A police officer provides security for U.S. Marines during a foot patrol in Husaybah, on May 15.

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Marshlands from page 1

size. More than 100,000 people who depended on the marshes to live were forced to relocate, and many migrated to neighboring Iran where a portion of the marshes were still intact.

"The (Iraqi) parliament knows the damage the previous regime caused to the environment," said Salima Inseel, head of the marshland department of the Ministry of Environment. She said the receded marshes, along with pollution from factories in the area, have led to unseasonably warmer temperatures in Iraq.

In 2003, immediately following Iraq's liberation by Coalition forces, the interim government set up the Center for the Restoration of Iraq Marshlands, under the supervision of the Ministry of Water Resources. The center is the lead organization for restoring the marshlands.

Ali Hashim Katie, the director of CRIM, said the marshes are already at about 40 percent of pre-1991 levels.

"The process of restoring the marshlands will cost more than the drying process. ... We need to develop better irrigation techniques and work with neighboring countries," he said.

Katie said that since much of the water for the marshes originates in Syria and Turkey,

his group is working with those countries to allow more water-flow into Iraq.

Dr. Latif Rashid, Minister of Water Resources, said CRIM is working with other Iraqi ministries and nongovernmental organizations on a five-year plan to restore the marshes to 75 percent of pre-1991 levels.

"We are delighted with the interest shown by the local, national and international stakeholders in the restoration of the Iraqi marshlands," he said.

As the marshes begin to fill with water again, the displaced people are beginning to move back to their ancient homeland and way of life.

"We're grateful to the people who are helping us," said Abdul Dakhel, a Marsh Arab who lives in a tiny village north of Basra.

"If the new government can make Iraq a stable country, then that is what will make my family happy."



A Marsh Arab woman carries goods back to her house in North Basra.

Photo of the week



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

The 22nd Light Infantry Battalion, 2nd Brigade of the Georgian Army celebrated its country's Independence Day in the International Zone on May 26.



Hero of the Week

Iraqi Soldier receives new hand and renewed hope

Story and Photo by Pfc. Edgar Reyes
4th Infantry Division

FOB KALSU - A Soldier from the 4th Infantry Division surprised an Iraqi Soldier this month with a gift of a prosthetic hand.

Maj. Steven Bauer, a division surgeon, presented the gift to Lt. Ceasar Hamed Hassan, a military intelligence officer with the 8th Iraqi Army Division during a surprise meeting at Forward Operating Base Iskandariyah.

"It is a satisfying end to a long process," said Bauer. "I am happy it works and it fits Hassan perfectly."

Hassan lost his left hand when his vehicle collided with two other vehicles loaded with bombs during a routine patrol. He also lost his comrades. All the other soldiers inside his vehicle died in the explosion.

Iraqi doctors treated Hassan for extensive shrapnel wounds and traumatic injuries to his left hand and arm. After much debate, his doctors recommended amputation near his shoulder to stop gangrene and infection from advancing to the rest of his body. Army doctors consulted with the Iraqi doctors and recommended amputating below the forearm to preserve most of the arm, giving Hassan the opportunity to use a prosthetic hand.

Despite the ordeal, Hassan said he continues to push forward and sees life positively.

"I am going to spend some time getting used to the new hand," said Hassan. "I have been able to learn to shoot weapons with one hand, but now it will be easier for me to practice with my new



Maj. Steven Bauer, a surgeon with the 4th Infantry Division, instructs Lt. Ceasar Hamed Hassan, a military intelligence officer with 8th Iraqi Army Division, on how to close and open his new prosthetic hand on May 4.

hand."

"I am very grateful for the gift the Coalition forces have given me. I want to thank them for taking time to help me with my situation. I know it took a long time to make something like this possi-

Australia pledges continued support for Iraqi forces

Story and photo courtesy of Australian Ministry of Defense

*F*or the past 12 months Australian troops have mentored and trained soldiers from the Iraqi Army's 10th Division.

The Australian government has agreed that in early June, a team of about 30 personnel will mentor and assist Iraqi Army instructors at the Basic Training Centre at Tallil near Nasiriyah in the Dhi Qar Province. They will replace British instructors who currently provide this support.

The BTC provides basic recruit training, as well as specialized and advanced training, to Iraqi Army Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers.

There will also be a small contingent based at the Counter Insurgency

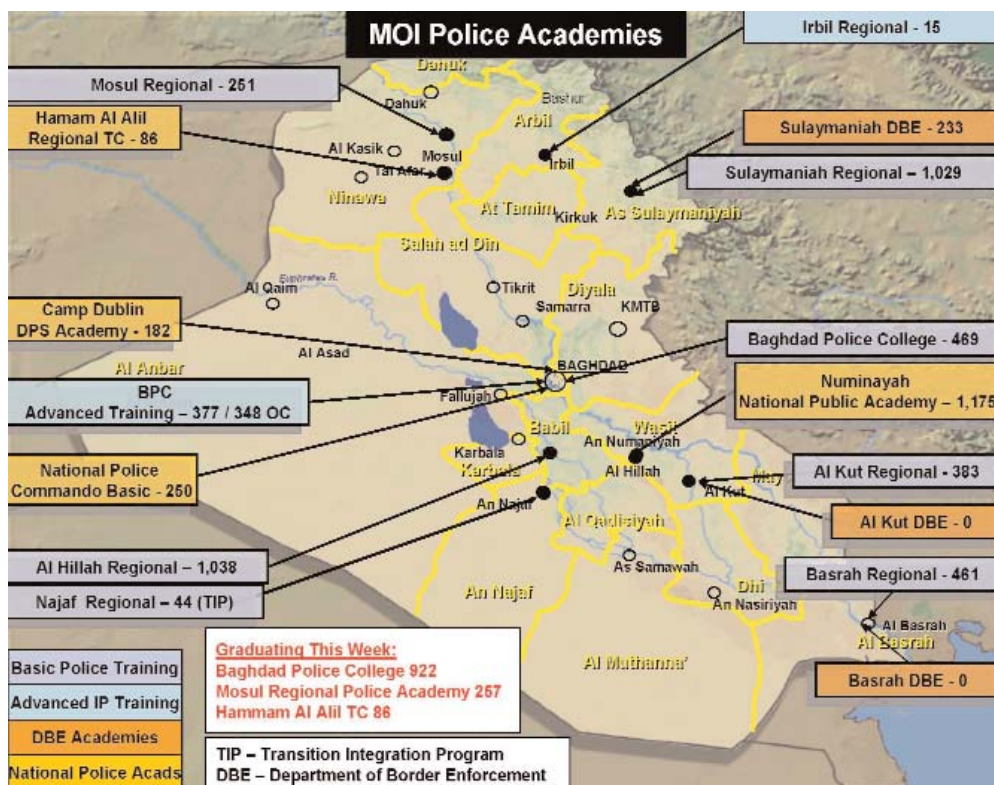
Academy in Taji, near Baghdad.

The academy is being developed as a training 'centre for excellence' in Iraq. Both Coalition and Iraqi personnel will be trained there in the tactics, techniques and procedures to defeat the insurgency that is affecting the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq.

These training activities provide a significant contribution to the stability and rehabilitation of Iraq by producing a more capable and professional Iraqi Army.



An Iraqi Army private runs with his rifle during an exercise with the Australian Army Training Team Iraq in Al Salman, in southern Iraq on May 1.



“The Iraqis have also just announced that they're going to establish a Police Ethics and Integrity Center. The Minister of Interior made that decision, which we think was a great one, which should encourage leader development, advanced ethical motivation and apply the principles of human rights to their policing.”

Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV
MNF-I Spokesman
June 2, Press Conference



“His capture is very, very significant to us. We truly believe with his capture that this will provide us some critical information as we continue trying to unravel the al-Qaida in Iraq network.”

Iraqis leading the way

“Out of 389 military operations conducted this past week, Iraqi Security Forces only -- with no Coalition support -- conducted almost 40 percent of them.”

Sheikh Ahmed Hussein Dabash Samir al- Batawi Captured

- Sheikh Ahmed Hussein Dabash Samir al- Batawi, aka Ahmed al-Dabash, a key insurgent leader in Iraq was captured by Iraqi and Coalition forces in the Ameriya neighborhood in the Mansour district of Baghdad May 29.

- Ahmed al-Dabash was a major financier and facilitator of terrorism in Iraq, most notably the bomb attack in the Shiite holy city of Karbala on March 2, 2004.

- More than 140 Iraqis were murdered and hundreds wounded in the attack that occurred during the Shiite observance of Ashoura, a time when thousands of pilgrims gathered in Karbala.



Ambassador visits Umm Qasr port

Story courtesy of the U.S. State Department

UMM QASR - U.S. Ambassador Daniel Speckhard, Director of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, visited the Umm Qasr port Saturday to highlight a U.S. government contribution to the port's reconstruction.

The director met with the Iraqi ports director general, the Umm Qasr Port north and south port managers and officials from the Iraqi Coast Guard and Navy. The U.S. has provided assistance to the port since the spring of 2003.

Through the United States Agency for International Development's program, all 21 berths were dredged to receive deep-draft ships and the Iraqi Port Authority was provided with extensive equipment and support to assist in building key capacity. Unexploded ordnances were identified and removed, the grain-receiving facility was renovated, allowing it to process up to 600 metric tons of grain an hour; repairs were made to the roll-on/roll-off berth and security upgrades were made.

The port reopened to commercial traffic in mid-June 2004, servicing the first passenger vessel a month later. Since then, as many as 80 ships offload cargo at the port every month; the port loaded over 20,999 trucks in April. Cargo volume continues to increase across a range of commodities



U.S. Army photo by Erich Langer

U.S. Ambassador Daniel Speckhard speaks about the success of the Umm Qasr port reconstruction with the media.

including cement, sugar, and wheat.

The U.S. has contributed over \$34 million dollars towards port projects including those under construction: a second roll-on/roll-off berth to help clear up the current two to four day delay; a security fence around the perimeter with observation posts will increase in security at the port and assist in obtaining the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code certification, which will lower shipper's insurance rates and make the port more attractive port of call for foreign shippers.



U.S. Army photo by Erich Langer

A port security boat passes by a ship while on water patrol.

Combined operation finds weapons cache in Basra

Story and photos courtesy of the British military

BASRA - A successful joint operation by members of the Iraqi Police Service and British Soldiers resulted in a significant seizure of arms, ammunition and bomb-making equipment in



Cpl. John Hawkes inspects a weapons cache during Operation Tinto on May 24. The 1st Light Infantry and the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian teamed up with Iraqi Police to conduct the operation.

Basra during the night of May 24.

Iraqi Police and troops from the Queen's Royal Hussars, Light Infantry, the Devon and Dorset Light Infantry and the Royal Anglian Regiment were involved in the operation. They surrounded and searched the properties of individuals suspected of involvement in anti-security force activities.

Their find included mortar rounds, fuses, rocket-propelled grenades and bomb making equipment. During the searches, in which there were no casualties, several Iraqi men were detained and three were questioned.

"We are working closely with the Iraqi Police to identify and target potential security threats in and around Basra in order to hamper efforts by a few individuals to disrupt significant progress being made in the area. This success shows our collaborative efforts are both effective and worthwhile," said Brigadier James Everard, commander 20th Armored Brigade.

The find followed a successful operation when two Iraqi men were followed and captured by Danish troops after they had launched a rocket attack on the main British base at Basra International Airport.

Troops catch major terror financier

Story by Sgt. Kristopher Joseph
Multi-National Corps - Iraq

Karbala-bombing terrorist nabbed

A key insurgent leader, Sheikh Ahmed Hussein Dabash Samir al-Batawi, aka Ahmed al-Dabash, was captured on May 29, by Iraqi and Coalition forces in the Ameriya neighborhood of Baghdad.

Al-Dabash was a major financier and facilitator of terrorism, most notably the bomb attack in the Shiite holy city of Karbala on March 2, 2004. More than 140 Iraqis were murdered and hundreds wounded in the attack during the Shiite observance of Ashoura.

Over the last two years, Coalition and Iraqi forces have arrested several of al-Dabash's underlings.

Cache in Wheat

Soldiers from Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 4th Infantry Division, discovered a large weapons cache and ammunition aboard a wheat dump truck northwest of Baghdad on May 30.

Soldiers had stopped the truck May 9 and discovered seven fuses, 15 mortar tips and wire commonly used in roadside bombs.

The weapons were discovered under bags of wheat in the truck bed on Tuesday while the unit was looking for additional evidence.

The cache consisted of rockets, anti-personnel mines, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and bomb-making materials. The driver of the truck was detained on May 9.

Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division also discovered a weapon cache while searching buildings in western Baghdad on Wednesday. The cache consisted of bombs and hand grenades.

Camp Thar Thar destroyed

While conducting assaults along southern Lake Thar Thar, west of Baghdad on May 23, Coalition forces captured 10 terrorists and destroyed a



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Cassandra Groce

Iraqi 4th Division Soldiers exit a building just cleared and continue to check the open areas around their sector during operations on May 31.

terrorist camp.

The troops found ammunition and electronic equipment used for making improvised explosive devices at the

'The weapons were discovered under bags of wheat in the truck bed.'

camp.

IED University

In two separate raids on Tuesday, Iraqi forces caught seven terrorists responsible for improvised explosive device attacks against Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad.

The first target was a Baghdad Technical University dormitory where terrorists built IEDs. Iraqi forces detained four terrorists there.

The second target was an apartment building near the campus. At this building, Iraqi forces detained three cell leaders responsible for emplacing IEDs made in the dormitory.

This cell is responsible for at least

two attacks against Iraqi security and police forces.

The first attack, in December, resulted in no casualties. The second attack, in January, killed several Iraqi Police officers.

Airstrike kills terrorists

A Coalition airstrike killed three terrorists who were attempting to emplace improvised explosive devices near Ramadi on May 28.

Another terrorist was wounded.

The individuals were linked to a weapons cache Coalition Forces destroyed in the area just south of Lake Thar Thar the same day. The cache included warheads, rockets, missiles and missile launchers.

Canal jumper caught

Coalition forces caught a terrorist and detained two suspects on May 28 near Taji. The two suspects surrendered immediately, while the terrorist tried to

See OPERATIONS, next page



U.S. Marine photo by Cpl. Joseph DiGirolamo

U.S. Marines with the 8th Marine Regiment search a vehicle during a patrol in Ramadi on May 23.

Operations

from previous page

escape by jumping into a nearby canal.

Seven not magnificent

Coalition forces captured seven terrorists with bomb-making materials during multiple assaults in southern Ramadi on May 28.

The troops also destroyed a terrorist car bomb along with IED-making materials.

One terrorist dead

Iraqi Police and Coalition Soldiers killed an insurgent after he attacked them with small-arms fire in Samarra on May 27.

Soldiers of the 978th Military Police Battalion were on a combined patrol with Samarra police when three insurgents started shooting at them from a sedan. The patrol returned fire, killing one of the occupants and disabling the car.

The other insurgents fled on foot.

An artillery round was found in the

vehicle.

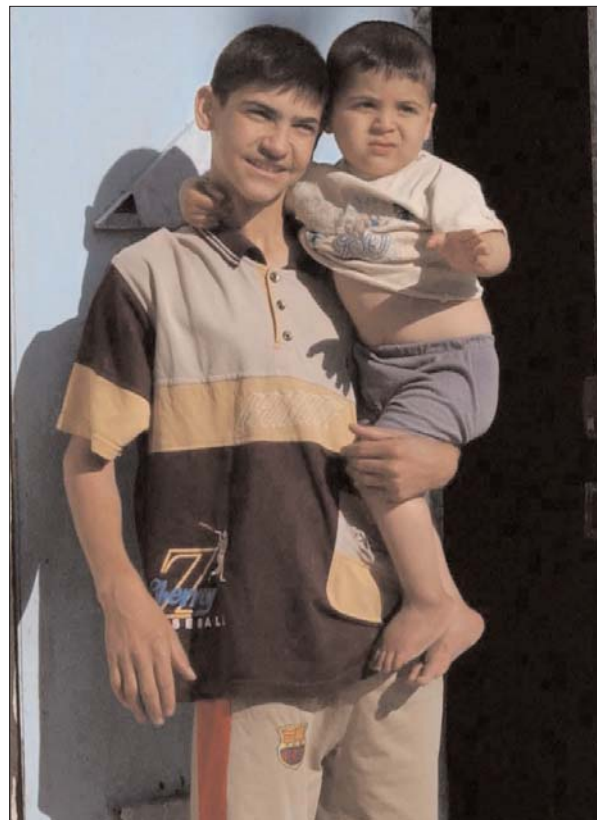
Both the shell and the car were confiscated by Samarran authorities.

Field of weapons

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers searched a house and yard south of Baghdad on May 26.

The Soldiers discovered a small weapons cache by the house and uncovered a sizeable cache in a field nearby.

The weapons cache in the field included machine guns, mortars, a rocket, large bags of homemade explosives, other bomb-making materials and ammunition. An Explosives Ordnance Disposal team destroyed



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Yolanda Moreno Leon

Iraqi civilians come out of their home following an Iraqi Army and police operation last week in Qayyarah.

Servicemembers to receive ethics training

Story by Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Alleged incidents of misconduct, such as those surrounding the Nov. 19 deaths of 24 civilians in Haditha, do not reflect the honorable service of the overwhelming majority of Coalition forces in Iraq, a U.S. general in Iraq said Friday.

“Almost without exception, the dedicated men and women who serve as part of Multi-National Corps - Iraq perform their duties in an exemplary manner every day,” Army Brig. Gen. Donald Campbell, chief of staff of Multi-National Corps - Iraq, said via satellite in a Pentagon news briefing.

“In the face of difficult and often dangerous circumstances, they demonstrate the discipline, sound judgment and high moral standards that are hallmarks of the military profession.”

While 99.9 percent of servicemembers in Iraq perform honorably, a small percentage takes the wrong path due to combat stresses, fear, isolation or other factors, Campbell said. Leaders understand the stresses that servicemembers in Iraq face, but they will not accept behavior that is

legally, morally or ethically questionable, he said.

“The behavior of our forces is a key component in the overall success of our mission,” he said. “The credibility of our Coalition forces is too valuable a commodity to squander needlessly.”

To reinforce the values training all servicemembers receive before deployment, leaders of Multi-National Corps - Iraq will conduct core values training in the next 30 days, Campbell said. This training was developed over the past few weeks and is focused on legal, moral and ethical standards on the battlefield, he said.

“Our forces receive this type of training prior to deployment, yet many of us have been here for five to nine months, and we felt it was prudent to conduct reinforcement training at this time.”

The training is a slide presentation that will take two to four hours to complete, Campbell said. The training opens with an introduction about the importance of military service, then goes on to sections on values, legal and ethical standards, interactive discussion questions, and possible battlefield scenarios.

The training package includes five possi-

ble scenarios, including encountering a roadside bomb and being engaged by enemy fire from a mosque or school, Campbell said. Servicemembers will discuss the ethical and legal issues in each scenario, and the proper reaction, he said.

Commanders will have freedom within the training to adjust or add scenarios.

All forces assigned to Multi-National Corps - Iraq will receive the training, Campbell said.

Any loss of civilian life is unfortunate, and the Coalition does everything it can to prevent harm to Iraqis, Campbell said.



Army Brig. Gen. Donald Campbell, chief of staff for Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

Albanian Commandos work hard to keep Mosul safe

Story by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle
138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — Albanian Commandos serve an important role in providing base security for Logistical Staging Area Diamondback in Mosul.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Speech

An Albanian soldier scans the horizon for anything suspicious in the northern city of Mosul.

Freedom, the commandos have been a dedicated partner in liberating the Iraqi people.

“Albania and the United States have very good relations that started many years ago,” said Maj. Arben Kinji, commander, 7th Albanian Contingent. “We wanted to do our part and help the Iraqi people become free.”

According to Kinji, his country made a decision to be a part of the Coalition and supports that decision.

The commandos are responsible for several missions on Diamondback and Forward Operating Base Marez. They provide tower and gate security, and force protection. They also conduct mounted and dismounted patrols and provide Soldiers for traffic control points.

“The Albanian contingent is a very important enabler to the brigade combat team, and are highly respected members of

our team,” said Col. Michael Shields, Commander, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

Shields also said that the Albanians have a unique contribution to the overall brigade fight. What the Albanians have done has allowed brigade Soldiers to successfully accomplish their mission on the streets of Mosul.

“Most of my Soldiers, between 70 to 80 percent, are here for the second time,” Kinji said. “Their morale is very high and they are very professional,” said Kinji.

According to Kinji, it is rewarding to be here because he has the support of the Albanian people.

“I want to be here, not only to support my Soldiers but also the Coalition,” said Kinji. “I want to make my people back home extremely proud of what we have accomplished.”

WOMEN JOIN THE RANKS OF IRAQI POLICE

Story and photos by
Journalist 2nd Class John J. Pistone
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

IRBIL — Women's rights might not be the first thing one thinks of when someone mentions Iraq, however, some officials in the Kurdish provinces in northern Iraq would like it to be.

According to Irbil Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari, equality is very important for the residents of the Kurdish provinces.

"We are working very hard to be progressive and set the standard for human rights in Iraq," he said.

According to Sinjari, changing the country's view of women is an important step to separate themselves from the old way of thinking.

Although women throughout Iraq have been given the right to vote and are accepted in the army and police academies, the city of Irbil was the first city to allow women to hold positions of power.

Iraqi Police Lt. Narseed, is one of the first female officers in the city.

She wanted to be a police officer at a very young age but thought that the career field would not be open within her lifetime. That all changed when the Coalition removed Saddam from power. She said she had already graduated college and was becoming a lawyer when she made the decision to become a police officer. "When I heard that the doors had opened for women to become officers, I jumped at the chance and then went to the police academy."

She said that she has no issue with men following orders or accepting her as an authoritative figure. "Here, there is no difference between male officers and female officers. If I tell the men to do something, they do it. There is no hesitation on their part."

She said that her years of law school have helped her tremendously.

"Being a lawyer has helped me with the investigative side of police work. I know what a judge or an attorney is going to be looking for. This gives me a slight edge over some of the others on the force,"

Abdulwahad at the Traffic Police Academy in Irbil.

In addition to her duties as a traffic officer, Abdulwahad is an instructor at the academy and helps translate Kurdish and English for her students and other instructors. Like Narseed, she has a four-year college degree and a degree from the Irbil Police Academy.

"We are equals, so we must work together," she said. "No longer are there barriers for women."

She said there is equal opportunity for women for promotions. According to Abdulwahad, a woman or man can be promoted in four years of duty if he or she passes an exam for promotion.

"Now they encourage woman to take a stand and work."

Both Narseed and Abdulwahad agree that the opportunities they enjoy are

because of the Kurdish provincial commitment to growth and the level of security found in Irbil. They also agree that they are important role models for Iraqi girls.

Narseed said the girls of Iraq need to see more strong women come to the forefront. They need to know that they are only limited by their imagination.

"We are professional; we deserve to be recognized for what we can contribute and not for our gender," said Narseed.

"Support those of us who want to walk a different path. We are all Iraqis - Sunni, Shiite, Kurd- male and female. We need to come together instead of pulling apart."



Police Lt. Narseed



Iraqi Police Lt. Col. Aswar talks about police strategy with Iraqi Police Lt. Narseed and U.S. Army Col. Donald Currier, the police transition team task force commander, at Khabat station in Irbil, April 26.

Narseed said.

Iraqi Police Lt. Col. Aswar, the Khabat station commander, said he is happy to have Narseed on the force.

"We find that she is much better at interrogation than most of her male counterparts, especially when it comes to interrogating women. She quickly identifies the hot buttons and knows how to get the right information," Aswar said.

According to Aswar, when Saddam was in power, he tried to brainwash the females in the country into believing that they could not do the same things as men, but his

beliefs were never really accepted in the Kurdish provinces.

"We knew that like so many successful and stable nations around the world, our views on women had to change," he said.

"We consider ourselves more modern and progressive compared to a lot of other cities in the Middle East."

Another woman setting the bar higher is Iraqi Police officer 2nd Lt. Lana

"We knew that like so many successful and stable nations around the world, our views on women had to change," Aswar said.

Rebuilding Iraq

Projects that are shaping a nation



At Tamim Province

The residents of Dibeka have a new police station, providing police with a better work environment.

Ninawa Province

About 4,000 residents in Mosul have increased electrical capacity with the installation of a new substation.

Kirkuk Province

Three completed water compact units in Kirkuk Province will now provide clean water to approximately 200,000 residents.



Basra Province

About 5,000 residents of the Basra Province will benefit from the paving and repairing 1.6 miles of roadway.

Baghdad

Sanitation/Water

Approximately 23,000 residents in Mansour will benefit from the installation of a 6-inch water distribution network providing them with clean, fresh, potable water.

Roads

About 100,000 residents in Mansour will benefit from the resurfacing of more than seven miles of road.

Public Buildings

The completed renovations to a school in Karadah will provide an improved learning environment and a brighter future for 450 school-aged children.

Electrical

Approximately 20,000 residents of Kharkh have improved electrical service with the installation of an electrical distribution network in Mahalla.

